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# GAIN Report

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## United Kingdom

### Livestock and Products

### UK confirms case of FMD on cattle farm

**2007**

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**Report Highlights:**

Late Friday, August 3, 2007, the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed a case of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) on a cattle farm near London. In addition to the EU-mandated measures, Defra immediately imposed a nationwide movement ban on all ruminants and pigs and stopped exports of all susceptible animals and animal products. The U.S. imports around 1,500 tons of UK pork ribs per year. Having faced criticism of its slow reaction to the 2001 FMD outbreak, which cost the UK economy around £8 billion, the UK Government has been widely praised for its quick response on this occasion. While the efforts to contain, control and eradicate the disease are ongoing, the principle lead in the parallel investigation into the source of the outbreak is the nearby Pirbright laboratory.

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Includes PSD Changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Annual Report

London [UK1]

[UK]

Late Friday, August 3, 2007, the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed a case of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) on a cattle farm near Guildford in Surrey, England, just 20 miles south west of London. In addition to the EU-mandated measures such as Protection and Surveillance Zones, Defra immediately imposed a nationwide movement ban on all ruminants and pigs and stopped exports of all susceptible animals and animal products. Of the affected trade, the principle U.S. import is around 1,500 tons of UK pork ribs per year.

The farm had been under restrictions since late on Thursday evening when symptoms were reported to Defra by the farmer. In accordance with domestic and EU legislation, a one kilometer Temporary Restriction Zone was placed around the premises on Friday while investigations and testing were completed. On confirmation of the disease later that day by Debby Reynolds, UK Chief Veterinary Officer, further measures were introduced. Again in accordance with EU legislation, a Protection Zone of three kilometers radius and a Surveillance Zone of 10 kilometers was placed around the premises. Additionally, under domestic contingency measures, Defra imposed a Great Britain (England, Wales & Scotland) wide national movement ban on all ruminants and pigs. This affects around 111,000 farms that include around 10 million cattle, 23 million sheep and 5 million pigs. Defra also halted all exports from Great Britain of susceptible animals and animal products. The principle U.S. import is pork ribs of which it takes around 1,500 tons per year.

On Saturday, August 4, 2007, Defra confirmed that the FMD strain found in Surrey is not one that has recently been found in animals. According to Defra, it is most similar to strains used in international diagnostic laboratories and in vaccine production, including at the Pirbright Laboratory just 4 miles from the affected farm. The Pirbright site is shared by the publicly-funded Institute of Animal Health (IAH) and Merial Animal Health Ltd, a pharmaceutical company with U.S. and French owners<sup>1</sup>. According to Defra, this strain is present at the IAH and was used in a vaccine batch manufactured in July 2007 by the Merial facility. While all potential sources of the virus continue to be investigated, Defra increased the size of the Protection Zone to encompass both the infected farm premises and the Pirbright site, with a single 10 kilometer radius Surveillance Zone. On a precautionary basis, Merial agreed to voluntarily halt vaccine production while the investigations continue.

Also, on Saturday, August 4, 2007, the culling of the cattle on the infected enterprise was completed. This included the 38 cattle known to be infected, and the cattle on two additional sites that together make up this same farming enterprise. The cattle on these two sites, both within the Surveillance Zone, showed no clinical signs of FMD but were culled in line with normal procedure and tested. Subsequent test results revealed that of the additional animals slaughtered one of them tested positive for FMD. An additional 3 kilometer radius Protection Zone and wider 10 kilometer radius Surveillance Zone were therefore placed around the second part of the farm on August 5, further extending the affected area. In addition, some precautionary culling of potentially dangerous contacts is also now being undertaken by Defra. Farmers will receive full compensation for infected animals or animals deemed to be dangerous contacts, half of which is funded by the European Union.

As of Monday, August 6, no further cases have been reported and the investigation into the source of the virus continues to principally focus on the Pirbright site.

The last major outbreak of this highly infectious viral disease in the UK was in 2001. One of the most contagious animal diseases, FMD spreads far more quickly than other livestock

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<sup>1</sup> Merial is a joint venture between U.S. company Merck and the French company Sanofi Aventis: [www.merial.com/company\\_history/index.asp](http://www.merial.com/company_history/index.asp)

diseases, having huge economic implications. In 2001, the outbreak was the worst experienced by Britain since proper records began and involved 2,030 cases spread across the country. As a direct result of disease, dangerous contact with the disease or on welfare grounds (following the extensive movement restrictions put in place at the time), some 6 million animals, mainly sheep, were culled. This resulted in losses of some £3.1 billion to agriculture and the food chain alone. Some £2.5 billion was paid by the Government in compensation for slaughtered animals and payments for disposal and clean up costs but the broader economy also suffered, particularly the tourism industry. As a result, total costs of the outbreak to the UK economy are put at near to £8 billion.

Clearly, the UK does not want a repeat of 2001. Both Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Hilary Benn, have returned from their respective holidays to oversee the measures to control and eradicate the disease and the parallel investigation into its source. The UK Government has been widely praised, both within the farming community and beyond, for its swift response to the crisis. All are hopeful that the source of the virus can be quickly confirmed and that no further spread of the disease is discovered.